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ABSTRACT

Background information on the development of the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada) is presented in this summary report covering the years 1988-1991. The Centre's major areas of focus are professional development, research, and community liaison. Professional development activities include preservice and inservice activities, graduate programs, and curricular materials development. Specific professional development projects include course development, distance education diploma program, distinguished lecture series, materials resource library, summer school program, thinking skills project, and video production. Research activities include a research seminar, research needs assessment survey, affiliate program, international exchange, research initiatives, a research journal, and the Centre of Inquiry. Community liaison has involved such activities as an advisory board, newsletter, a parent program, the Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education, and consultative services. (JDD)

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CENTRE FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

SUMMARY REPORT 1988 - 1991

Prepared by

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Director

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

EC300710

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the Spring of 1987, the Department of Advanced Education received a gift of $1 million which has been matched 2:1 to create an endowment fund of $3 million. The revenue from the endowment was specifically designated to support projects relating to the needs of gifted and talented individuals. The Department of Advanced Education organized a representative ad hoc Consultative Group which met in April, 1987 to suggest viable endowment interest disbursement alternatives to Dave Russell, the Minister of Advanced Education. A major recommendation of this group was to establish a university-based Centre for the Gifted. The summary report, which was presented to the Minister of Advanced Education in the summer of 1987, specifically recommended that universities in Alberta be invited to submit proposals for a Centre for the Gifted by March 31, 1988.

The Minister of Advanced Education sent letters to the Universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge inviting each to submit a proposal for the creation and operation of a Centre on February 1, 1988. Proposals were submitted by March 31, 1988, and a three-person proposal review panel was invited to review submitted proposals and to make a recommendation to the Minister of Advanced Education as to which university should receive the funding. On June 24, 1988, the Minister sent a news release announcing the decision to base the Centre for Gifted Education at The University of Calgary. The news release states:

> *"The University of Calgary has committed to beginning the centre immediately; it will be built upon already demonstrated initiatives in gifted education," said Mr. Russell. "There is a strong public interest in programs for gifted students in our school systems and this new centre will enhance provincial training opportunities and create resource materials for teachers who work with gifted students throughout Alberta. As one of our nation's major research and teaching facilities, The University of Calgary will be able to provide leadership to the rest of Canada in the field of teaching gifted students," he added.*

The University of Calgary Centre for Gifted Education is committed to the goal of ensuring that teachers and students throughout the province benefit from the programs developed as a result of this project. The Centre for Gifted Education is housed in Room 846 of the Faculty of Education Tower and commenced operation in September, 1988.

MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS

The Centre for Gifted Education, as an interdisciplinary agency housed within the Faculty of Education, works to advance the teaching of gifted and talented students in the province of Alberta by developing a greater understanding of their educational, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. The three primary goals which serve to guide and focus the programs and activities of the Centre are:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Centre collaborates with university departments and community agencies to develop and deliver pre-service and in-service activities, graduate programs, and curricular materials for teachers and other professionals working in the field of gifted education.

The specific projects and activities associated with professional development which have been implemented include the following:

a) Course Development

The University of Calgary

EDIS 549.57	Giftedness: What the Experts Say
EDPS 693.69	Advanced Study of the Psychology of the Gifted
EDPS 547	Psychology and Education of Gifted and Talented
EDPS 693.86	Counselling and Guidance Needs of Gifted Students
EDPS 693.89	Research Developments in Gifted and Special Education

EDPS 693.02	Assessment: Theory and Interpretation in Gifted and Special Education
EDPS 695.60	Practicum in Gifted and Special Education
EDIS 549.45	Energizing Potential in Gifted Curriculum Development
EDPS 694.62	Consultation in Gifted and Special Education
EDPS 693.17	Theoretical Foundations of Gifted and Special Education

All of the above courses, with the exception of EDPS 547, are newly developed courses by Centre for Gifted Education faculty members.

The University of Alberta

EDPS 497	Curriculum Differentiation for the Gifted
EDPS 597	Issues in Giftedness
EDPS 592	Psychology and Education of the Gifted

The University of Lethbridge

ED 405	The Psychology and Education of Children with Special Intellectual Needs and Creativity

b) Distance Education Diploma Program

An after degree diploma program has been developed and is currently offered via distance education. Utilizing the latest advances in technology, all teachers in Alberta have the opportunity to undertake specialized study in gifted education. To date, over twenty-five individuals from across Alberta have been admitted into the program.

c) Distinguished Lecture Series

The Centre conducted a lecture series in the Fall of 1989 which brought six leading scholars to Edmonton, Lethbridge and Calgary to present current research and program development information. On average, there were approximately 250 registrants for each of the six speaker sessions. In addition all three universities were able to run courses in conjunction with the

lecture series. Professionally edited videotapes and corresponding study guides have been developed and distributed to the co-sponsors and have been made available for general purchase.

d) Materials Resource Library

The Centre has assembled a professional library of readings, materials and teaching resources reserved for faculty and graduate student use. Our goal is to maintain a collection which has all of the works of significance to the development of gifted education programs and research. The complete collection is replicated, at Centre expense, in the Education Materials Centre and the MacKimmie Library.

e) Summer School Program

The Centre instituted a summer school program for gifted students which has been offered annually since 1989. This program is held in conjunction with the Mini-University program, and there is involvement of the EDPS 575 undergraduate special education practicum course as well. Future plans are to expand the program to provide for more gifted students and to run this in conjunction with other university summer school courses.

f) Curriculum Materials Development Project

The Centre for Gifted Education and Educational Response Centre and Parkland School Division have jointly sponsored the development of curriculum materials undertaken by Parkland School Division staff. The project is in its completion phase and following pilot testing will be made available by December, 1991.

g) Thinking Skills Project

This project involved the collaboration of the County of Wheatland, County of Vulcan, Willow Creek School Division, Foothills School Division, Rocky View School Division and the Centre for Gifted Education. A workshop under the direction of Dr. Don Treffinger was held on May 10, 1990 to train trainers how to

carry out workshops on productive thinking. The primary aim of this project was to provide teachers with the skills to develop productive thinking within their regular classroom.

h) Video Production

A proposal was submitted to Communications Media to develop a video entitled *Do It For The Kids*. This proposal was approved and the videotape has recently been completed. This video is frequently used in Centre workshop presentations and is available for purchase by individual schools or districts. An accompanying handbook has also been developed.

RESEARCH

The Centre conducts research aimed at the development and advancement of knowledge necessary to improve the quality of instruction and support provided for individuals who are gifted and talented.

With an emphasis on applied research and development the Centre has assumed a leading role in drawing together the results of research relating to gifted and talented individuals and the educators who can implement these findings. The Centre is positioned to identify research opportunities and to coordinate multidisciplinary collaborative research efforts. Specific activities that have been initiated during these first three years of our operation include:

a) Research Seminar

A monthly research seminar has been offered, beginning the Fall, 1988. This seminar offers graduate students and faculty at The University of Calgary, as well as professionals in the community, an opportunity to exchange information concerning research proposals and to share the results.

b) Research Needs Assessment Survey

A survey was circulated during the Winter term of 1989 to every school district in Alberta to obtain feedback regarding perceived

research needs in the field. The information has been analyzed and is being used as a guide for research initiatives on the part of the Centre for Gifted Education. A summary publication of this survey has been published in *Alberta Gifted and Talented Education.*

c) Affiliate Program

The Centre provides the opportunity for short-term teaching release of faculty members to work on a specified research project in gifted education. Two faculty members, one from Educational Psychology and one from Teacher Education and Supervision, participated in this program during the 1989-1990 term. The criteria for involvement in this program is that the research relate directly to gifted education. The current focus is to encourage participants from other departments within the Faculty of Education as well as other faculties at The University of Calgary.

d) International Exchange

The Centre has been instrumental in hosting and assisting leading scholars in gifted education to visit Calgary. To date we have had visitors from England, Holland, Japan, Turkey, Germany, Russia and India. In the interest of encouraging and promoting this type of exchange, all Centre faculty are members of the World Council on Gifted and Talented Children.

e) Research Initiatives

Centre faculty have been involved in a number of conference presentations including the National Association for Gifted Children; European Conference on High Ability; the World Council on Gifted and Talented; Council for Exceptional Children; and the Canadian Conference on Giftedness. Presently, the Centre faculty and associates are involved in a number of research projects, including a recent SSHRC award to examine the unique challenges that face *at-risk* gifted students.

f) Research Journal

A new journal, *Exceptionality Education Canada*, has been initiated by Centre faculty and colleagues. The journal provides a forum for university faculty and practitioners in the field of gifted and special education to share their research and views with Canadian colleagues.

g) Centre of Inquiry

The Centre has initiated a joint research effort with the F. E. Osborne Junior High School entitled *Evaluating an Accelerated Mathematics Program: A Centre of Inquiry Approach.* The purpose of this study is to use the Centre of Inquiry concept to provide formative and summative evaluation information regarding the Accelerated Mathematics Program which began in 1987 at F. E. Osborne Junior High School. Specifically, we plan to conduct longitudinal follow-ups of students who have completed an accelerated mathematics program and to conduct research on selection criteria that best predicts success in the accelerated program.

COMMUNITY LIAISON

The Centre serves as liaison for interest groups in the education of the gifted (professional organizations, parent groups, school boards, government centres, university faculties, education departments, community colleges); it provides consultation, public information, and advocacy for the betterment of educational services for the gifted and talented.

The primary programs and activities associated with this goal include the following:

Advisory Board

Professionals, public representatives and government officials sit on the Centre Advisory Board to monitor the activities of Centre staff and associates. This body meets twice per year

and provides direction and information on how well the Centre is serving the needs of the community.

Newsletter

The Centre compiles and distributes a newsletter every two months which summarizes the events, information, programs and matters of interest to associated professionals, groups, agencies, parents, and governmental representatives. The current mailing list is approximately 700.

Parent Program

The Centre has developed a specific information course for parents which is entitled *Parents and Gifted Education* (PAGE). This course was offered through Continuing Education during the Winter term 1990 and 1991. The course is directed at helping parents work with and support the development of their own gifted children.

Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education (SAGE)

The Centre has initiated the formation of an umbrella group of primary stakeholders in gifted education in the province. The SAGE group includes: The University of Calgary Centre for Gifted Education; The Alberta Associations for Bright Children; The Gifted and Talented Education Council of the Alberta Teacher's Association; and The Alberta Education Response Centre. SAGE has successfully organized the first of what is to become an annual provincial conference in gifted education. The first SAGE conference *Energizing Potential* was held in Calgary, Alberta on September 27 to 29th, 1990.

Consultative Services

This program was implemented in the Fall of 1990, and offers to schools and school districts a variety of services including workshops, consultation, research, assessment and evaluation on a fee for service basis. Areas of expertise available in this

program include computer applications, teaching strategies, administration, counselling, research and development, program continuity, subject areas, gifted education, individual assessment and staff development. Response to this program has been very positive and Centre associates affiliated with the Consultative Services have carried out a number of contracts in jurisdictions throughout Alberta.

STAFFING

During the 1990-91 term the following staff members were appointed with the Centre for Gifted Education:

Director	Dr. Judy Lupart
Coordinator of Programs & Services	Dr. Sal Mendaglio
Coordinator of Research	Dr. Michael Pyryt
Coordinator of Consultative Services	Mr. Don Green
The University of Alberta Liaison	Dr. Carolyn Yewchuk
Centre Associates	Mr. Anthony Hampshire Mrs. Lynne Cunningham Ms. Deborah Fairhurst
Librarian	Mrs. Barbara Brydges
Administrative Assistant	Mrs. Linda Head
Secretary	Mrs. M.J. Samuelson

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